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SUBJECT: UNSC: MIDDLE EAST CONSULTATIONS TAME THIS MONTH,  
GIVEN FOCUS ON GEORGIA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: U/SYG Lynn Pascoe briefed the Security Council during an open meeting on the Middle East on August 20. He stressed that the benefits of the cease-fire have not translated into an improvement of everyday living conditions in Gaza. He welcomed the planned release of 200 Palestinian prisoners by Israel and highlighted the two shootings of Palestinian children by Israeli forces in the West Bank using live ammunition. On Lebanon, he said the UN looks forward to working with the Lebanese government to meet its objectives on the national dialogue process and encouraged Lebanon and Syria to move quickly on border delineation. After Pascoe's briefing, the Council moved to closed consultations where the majority of delegations echoed Pascoe's remarks, including those on continuing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Israeli settlement activity, and condemnation of the August 14 attack in Tripoli. Ambassador Wolff called on the Secretary General to dispatch a technical team to Israel, Lebanon, and Syria on the Sheba'a Farms issue to discuss the cartographer's report and next steps and then report back to the Council. The South African Permanent Representative suggested that the Security Council invite the Quartet to update the Council in September. End summary.

U/SYG Pascoe: Gaza cease-fire  
has not yielded better  
conditions for population  
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¶2. (SBU) U/SYG Lynn Pascoe briefed the Security Council August 20 on developments in the Middle East over the last month, noting the internal Palestinian violence in Gaza and its potential consequences for UN operations. Overall, he stressed that normal life in Gaza remains very difficult and the benefits of a cease-fire have not translated into an improvement in the everyday living conditions of the population. While he described a 75 percent increase in truck shipments into Gaza, he noted that they represented only 54 percent of the May 2007 level. He highlighted the continued pumping of Gaza sewage into the Mediterranean and, after the South Africans raised that it was a lack of equipment issue, noted that the UN is seized with finding a solution to this problem. He welcomed Israeli plans to release 200 Palestinian prisoners but also flagged the two shootings of Palestinian children by Israeli forces in the West Bank using live ammunition. He briefed on the continuing Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank, including outside the footprint of established settlements. He urged donors to fulfill their assistance pledges to the Palestinian Authority, given the anticipated budgetary shortfall in September.

¶3. (SBU) On Lebanon, he welcomed the cabinet statement; the vote of confidence; and President Sleiman's intention to start the National Dialogue process. Pascoe stressed that the UN looks forward to working with the Lebanese government to meet its objectives. On the Sleiman/Asad meeting in Damascus, he encouraged the two parties to move immediately forward with border delineation. He vigorously condemned the

August 14 bombing in Tripoli. He noted that UNIFIL continues its operations south of the Litani River. He listed the upcoming meetings in September, on the margins of the UNGA: (1) the Quartet; (2) the Secretary-General's Iftar; and (3) the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) where he hoped progress could be made on the actual delivery of pledges to the PA, given the budget crisis.

U.S. remarks  
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14. (SBU) In his remarks during the Council's closed consultations, Ambassador Wolff began by first describing the ongoing talks between the Israelis and Palestinians as sincere, substantive negotiations that are addressing the core concerns and remain confidential at the parties' request. While the U.S. is focused on that track, Israel and Syria continue their indirect talks and we support those efforts, he said, but the breadth of Syria's activities of concern must be addressed. Second, he stressed that Palestinian capacity-building is key to the success of the process. The Palestinian Authority is in dire straits financially, he said, and urgently needs additional financial support, and encouraged regional governments with outstanding commitments, especially those around the table, to assist. Third, he condemned the violent efforts by Hamas and other groups to usurp the lawful authority of the PA in Gaza, in sharp contrast to the improving situation in the West Bank. He stressed that the Quartet's principles remain determinative: renunciation of violence and terror, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements between the parties. Finally, he welcomed the opening by

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Israel of two checkpoints in the West Bank and the announced intention to release 200 Palestinian prisoners but also reiterated our deep concern at continuing Israeli settlement activity and called on Israel to freeze this activity and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

15. (SBU) On Lebanon, he said that the U.S. views full implementation of UNSCR 1559 and 1701, as well as the pledges made in the Doha Agreement as essential to the safeguard of Lebanon's sovereignty and security. He welcomed the August 14 announcement on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon and called for a normalization of relations, including the delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian border. He called on the Secretary General to engage with Syria and Lebanon to encourage immediate progress on this issue. He noted U.S. concern with the reports of breaches of the arms embargo on the Lebanon-Syria border and noted the Secretary-General's observation that full implementation of the arms embargo is an indispensable provision of UNSCR 1701 and that regional group, especially Iran and Syria, maintaining ties with Hizballah and other groups in Lebanon are obliged to respect and fully abide by the arms embargo. He conveyed condolences for the August 14 attack and stressed that the international community must stand with the GOL and insist on the authority of the state. He urged the Secretary General to send engage directly with Israel, Lebanon, and Syria on the Sheba'a Farms issue, including by dispatching a technical mission to visit the three countries to discuss the cartographer's report and next steps and then report back to the Council.

South Africans suggest UNSC briefing  
by Quarter Rep Tony Blair in September  
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16. (SBU) The South African Permanent Representative suggested that the Security Council invite the Quartet to update the Council in September. When Mr. Pascoe later responded to this comment, he said he would speak with Quartet Representative Tony Blair about briefing the Council.

Members on Israeli-Palestinian  
negotiations and Israeli settlement  
activity; concern about Gaza conditions  
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¶7. (SBU) On Israeli-Palestinian issues, most delegations welcomed the continuing negotiations but voiced concern that an agreement would not be reached before the end of the year.

All delegations highlighted the potential harm from continuing Israeli settlement activity. Costa Rica stated that settlements had grown by a factor of six since the Annapolis conference. Many states, including Vietnam, highlighted the continued obstacles to movement in the West Bank and the crossing closures into Gaza and called for an end to such restrictions. France highlighted Israel's decision to re-open the Kerem Shalom crossing. Several delegations, including Libya and South Africa, highlighted the large number of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, as compared to the 200 scheduled for release. The UK deplored the violence instigated by Hamas in Gaza. Russia noted the need for a "unitary" Palestinian Authority. Most delegations welcomed the continuing talks between Israel and Syria under the auspices of Turkey.

Calls for implementation of  
Lebanon-Syria border delineation;  
condemnation of Tripoli attack  
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¶8. (SBU) On Lebanon, the majority of delegations welcomed the new government and the vote of confidence it received. Delegations also welcomed the joint Syrian and Lebanese decision to delineate their borders, with Croatia expressing hope for a swift process. There was uniform condemnation of the August 14 attack in Tripoli. Burkina Faso used the Tripoli bombing as an example to call upon all actors in the region to exercise restraint given the tension in the international community.  
Khalilzad